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THE NOVELS OF MURIEL SPARK EXAMINED
ACCORDING TO THE TERMS OF
C. G. JUNG'S THEORY OF MODERNITY

by

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ABSTRACT

This study of the novels of Muriel Spark attempts to trace the existence of a link between Jung's theories of "modernity" and the basic principles behind Muriel Spark's novels. Chapter I attempts to establish the link, followed in Chapter II by an examination of the central characters of the novels as "moderns." Two lines of development are then taken up in Chapters III and IV, Chapter III being devoted to an examination of the nature of evil in the novels, and Chapter IV to a discussion of Muriel Spark's claims to being a satirist.

This thesis acknowledges that it is difficult to draw conclusions from an unfinished canon of work, but suggests that, if the examination of the novels according to Jung's theories is valid, the way is opened up for an examination of hidden tragic potential which has been held in check by the author. The thesis denies that Mrs. Spark is a satirist, and suggests that she is a writer of comedy, with distinct tragic potential.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
I JUNG AND MRS. SPARK	7
II THE CENTRAL CHARACTERS AS MODERNS . .	19
III THE NATURE OF EVIL	44
IV MURIEL SPARK AS A SATIRIST	65
CONCLUSION	78
FOOTNOTES	82
BIBLIOGRAPHY	84

INTRODUCTION

Presumably because Muriel Spark is still developing as a novelist, and because she is popularly known as a satirist, there has been very little extensive or serious criticism of her novels. In the first instance, it is, of course, difficult to conduct a penetrating survey of an unfinished body of work; in the second instance, the word "satirist" has tended recently to push contemporary work in the satiric genre onto the level of pure entertainment, to be dealt with in short essays of the book review type, instead of being subjected to a more serious survey.

Unless the contemporary satirist can also be labelled "absurdist" and/or "exponent of black humour," he is likely to be regarded, by the reading public and the critics, in an almost affectionate light, as an entertainer. The demand that the satirist be heavily involved in the follies and problems of his characters seems to have faded, and the name of the satirist has come to be applied to writers who are actually humorists. Modern satire has been pushed into a no-man's land between classical satire and classical comedy, partly due to the feeling that the modern so-called satirist is uncommitted to a moral point of view, and indifferent to the problems of his char-

acters and partly due to the misapplication of the name of "satirist." Although critics are divided as to the total nature of the satirist, nevertheless they are generally agreed upon one basic requirement which is that the satirist has a set of principles to which he is committed. Who, among contemporary writers, is usually known under the title of satirist? Let us say that the names of Kingsley Amis, Angus Wilson, Evelyn Waugh, Iris Murdoch, Mary McCarthy, Joseph Heller, Gunter Grasse, Leonard Cohen, Vladimir Nabokov, and J. P. Donleavy would spring to mind. Of these how many could truthfully be said to be committed to a cause, or to the promotion of a set of principles? As far as I can see only one, Evelyn Waugh. The others are surely writers of comedy; that is, they are presenters of the factual nature of foolishness, or the foolish nature of fact. This is not to say that they never employ the methods of the satirist; it is to say that the main emphasis of their work is comic rather than satiric.

I think that Muriel Spark is committed as a writer to the defence of the soul against the attack of Evil and that an examination of this factor will help to establish whether or not she is a truly satiric writer. It seems to me that Mrs. Spark's involvement in the problems of her characters is a separate thing from her satire. That is to say, I do not consider her to be a true satirist in the classical

sense, partly because she is uncommitted to the subjects of her supposed satiric attack, a subject which will be discussed in a later chapter. The nature and extent of the sufferings of her principal characters also throw doubt on her claim to the name of satirist. Characters in classical satire are not normally allowed to be aware that they are undergoing extensive suffering. The suffering is done on their behalf by the reader. Once an author makes his characters conscious of their suffering, he steps outside the genre of satire into either comedy or tragedy, and I think that Muriel Spark is, at present, and in the classical sense, a writer of comedy rather than satire because of the treatment her principal characters receive.

The over-all achievement of her novels seems to reside in the presentation of various characters who undergo real spiritual suffering, who are in the grip of what C.G. Jung calls "the problems of modernity." The definitions of "modernity," as they are presented in Jung's "The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man" (1933) and in The Undiscovered Self (1957), will be dealt with fully in the first chapter of this thesis, but it is enough to say at this point that they are basically concerned with the individual's search for his Self. I am unable to argue the validity of the theories which Jung presents, nor am I able to establish undeniable proof that his ideas have influenced Mrs. Spark consciously in her novels. That she is familiar with at least one area of his work is proved by an article, written by

Mrs. Spark for the Church of England newspaper, entitled "The Mystery of Job's Suffering--Jung's New Interpretation Examined." Jung's interest in Job arises from the similarity of his sufferings to those of modern man, in particular in the way in which the evils undergone seem to be totally undeserved. On the evidence of this article, it can be assumed that Mrs. Spark is interested in Jung's ideas on the sufferings of a "modern man."

I was led to attempt an examination of Mrs. Spark's novels on Jungian terms by several comments which she made in the course of an interview with W. J. Weatherby, entitled "My Conversion." In the interview she states quite definitely that her ability to write novels and to find some pattern for her thoughts was largely dependent on her conversion to the Catholic faith, following a nervous breakdown. She speaks of herself and of what her conversion means to her in terms which are too reminiscent of Jung's theories to be ignored. She says "Catholicism. . . is really a Christian thing to me conducive to individuality, to finding one's own individual personal point of view."¹ And later in the same interview she says "I used to worry until I got a sense of proportion. . . you need it to be either a writer or a Christian."²

These comments lead me to think that Mrs. Spark's progress, as an individual and as an author, is closely connected with the picture

Jung presents of modern man, and I think that her present position of security within the Roman Catholic faith is her particular solution to the problems of modernity. I hope to show that, in her novels, Mrs. Spark is committed to presenting a series of modern characters whom she tries to lead to the same solution to their problems that she found, that is, to established religion.

In using a few of Jung's theories as a critical base I may be risking an over-enthusiastic application of an under-assimilated set of ideas; however, I think it is worth the risk in order to show that a new approach to Mrs. Spark's writing is necessary to lift her from the ranks of the merely piquant entertainer to those of considerable worth. There are three distinct levels in her books--that of Catholicism, that of so-called satire, and that of suffering, and these achieve a smoother blend when interpreted according to some of Jung's theories.

The approach which I have taken is only one of several which could be worthwhile, and the area which this thesis covers is, therefore, limited in its scope. I am aware that imposing a set of criteria from a different field of study in order to examine a literary work sometimes has the effect of killing the patient and condemning him to the pathology laboratory. To date, however, the critical work done on Mrs. Spark's novels has been of a decidedly vague nature and has concerned itself more with the general impression her novels make rather than with the establish-

ment of a definite approach; the result is that she is generally agreed to be a clever and entertaining satirist, and very little criticism of greater weight has been made. I think it is necessary to limit the width and increase the depth of this enquiry, so that it does not become simply another depressingly vague survey of the critic's personal reactions.

CHAPTER I

JUNG AND MURIEL SPARK

In novels such as The Comforters (1957), The Bachelors (1960), The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (1961) and The Mandelbaum Gate (1965), Muriel Spark presents us with an array of characters who are undergoing the agonies of the process of Individuation, as it is described by Jung in such works as Aion, Answer to Job and Modern Man in Search of a Soul (1933). I see her central characters as "moderns" who are trying, from a traditional background of Roman Catholicism, to attain that harmony of personality which Jung calls the Self. The terms "modern," "Individuation" and "Self" require some explanation, as do Jung's theories on them.¹

In the works listed, Jung is concerned with the spiritual problems of the man whom he labels "modern." Undoubtedly, he is mainly concerned with twentieth century man, after he has experienced numerous wars and a general moral disintegration, but the term "modern" is generic rather than historic and would appear to be applicable to any man in any age who is living through the agonies of Individuation. Modern man is the man who no longer finds satisfaction and comfort in the old, established and therefore largely unconscious traditions of his race. In the essay "The Modern Spiritual Problem," Jung defines his

modern man as one who is tearing himself free from the participation mystique, the state of being undifferentiated from his environment, from the collective traditions, values and attitudes of his race which have become largely unconscious. Modern man, according to Jung, is striving to leave behind his unconscious life, using it as the nursery-bed of consciousness. He is aiming for a state of full consciousness, for a total expression of personality which will include both the conscious and the unconscious, for a unity of being which Jung calls the Self.

The process of becoming a whole Self is Individuation, a painful experience which involves meeting and becoming reconciled with dark, repressed elements in the unconscious and means leaving the safety of received opinions and the participation mystique that is the collective spiritual life of his race. Modern man is therefore characterized by his loneliness, his state of being cut off from his society, and by a high degree of consciousness. He is interested in various forms of religion other than the established churches, because he has a natural religious function which needs to be satisfied.

When discussing modern man's justification for breaking with tradition, Jung says "The man who claims to be modern. . . must be proficient in the highest degree, for unless he can atone by creative ability for his break with tradition, he is merely disloyal to the past."²

It is this criterion of proficiency and creativity which Jung uses to distinguish true moderns from pseudo-moderns and which he regards as a justification for optimism concerning the future of mankind. He points out, however, that the unconscious, as well as being a source of creativity, is also the storehouse of repressed evils, so that the unconscious contains potential for both good and evil.

Although a simple description of the problems and nature of modern man provides a set of criteria against which Mrs. Spark's characters will later be measured, there is, on Jung's part, a deep interest in the effects of the problems and a compassionate understanding of the agonies they cause which draws the psychologist and the novelist close in attitude. Jung uses psychological terms such as Individuation to describe a course of events with which Mrs. Spark deals imaginatively, but he seems to leave the confines of strict psychology and to enter the realm of metaphysics. His views on the human spirit seem to be essentially religious, he has a profound perception of, and respect for those areas of human life which cannot be examined by any known scientific process. His answers to direct questions as to whether or not he believes in God are, however, usually less than direct. For instance, in H. L. Philp's book Jung and The Problem of Evil, we find the following question and answer:

Question 3. In your Answer to Job, you state:

"However, I have been asked so often whether I believe in the existence of God or not that I am somewhat concerned lest I be taken for an adherent of psychologism far more commonly than I suspect."

You go on to say "God is an obvious psychic and nonphysical fact," but I feel in the end you do not actually answer the question as to whether or not you believe in the existence of God other than as an archetype. Do you?

Answer 3. An archetype is an image. An image. . . is a picture of something. An archetypal image is like the portrait of an unknown man in a gallery. His name, his biography, his existence in general are unknown, but we assume nevertheless that the picture portrays a once living subject, a man who was real. We find numberless images of God, but we cannot produce the original. There is no doubt in my mind that there is an original behind our images but that it is inaccessible.³

The further evidence of his work Answer to Job (1954), establishes a definite link between the process of Individuation and the discovery of a meaningful Christ. Modern man supposedly casts off his traditional beliefs at the beginning of his search for Self because they are largely unconscious and inherited, and he is eager to achieve supreme consciousness. However, Jung sees the attainment of Self as an assumption by man of a totality and harmony of nature comparable to that for which Christ is the traditional Symbol. For this process he has coined the phrase "the Christification of many."⁴ Since this implies blasphemy in Christian terms, Jung is careful to set up his defences against possible charges of blasphemy, the very provision of which seems to indicate a deep concern about his relations with established churches. On the

final page of Answer to Job he says

the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the third Divine Person, in man brings about a Christification of man, and the question then arises whether these many are all complete God-men. Such a transformation would lead to insufferable collisions between them, to say nothing of the unavoidable inflation to which the ordinary mortal, who is not freed from original sin, would instantly succumb. In these circumstances it is well to remind ourselves of St. Paul and his split consciousness: on the one side he felt he was the apostle directly called and enlightened by God, and, on the other side, a sinful man who could not pluck out the "thorn in the flesh" and rid himself of the Satanic angel who plagued him. That is to say, even the enlightened person remains what he is, and is never more than his own limited ego before the One who dwells in him, whose form has no knowable boundaries, who encompasses him on all sides, fathomless as the abysses of the earth and vast as the sky.⁵

According to the evidence of Answer to Job, it seems likely that Jung sees the solutions to the problems of modern man in a religious light, which, of course, provides a link with Muriel Spark although Jung is difficult to pin down concerning established religion. In Answer to Job, however, he appears to feel that the Roman Catholic Church is dealing with modern spiritual problems better than the Protestant Church because it allows room for dogma to expand and grow, while the Protestant Churches refused to develop intellectually after the establishment in the seventeenth century of the New Testament as the chief body of Protestant dogma. He says that Catholicism

gives the archetypal symbolisms the necessary freedom and space in which to develop over the centuries while at the same time insisting on their original form, unperturbed by intellectual difficulties and the objections of rationalists. In this way, the Catholic Church demonstrates her maternal character, because she allows the tree growing out of her matrix to develop according to its own laws.⁶

The impression one gets of his attitude to established churches is that it is well enough if they can provide the disturbed modern man with religious satisfaction and comfort. Frieda Fordham gives the following explanation of Jung's attitude:

What organized religion has always tried to do, with varying success, has been to provide satisfying forms for those deep human needs which now find such dangerous or banal expression [i. e. Communism, Nazism, etc.], and to express 'the living process of the unconscious in the form of the drama of repentance, sacrifice and redemption.' Dogma, creed and ritual are crystallized forms of original religious experience, worked over and refined, sometimes for centuries, until they reach the forms in which we know them. In this way, channels are made which control the unruly and arbitrary 'supernatural' influences. A living church protects men from the full force of an experience which can be devastating; instead of being gripped by the collective unconscious, they can participate in a ritual which expresses it sufficiently to 'purge' by its reflection.⁷

Later in the same chapter, Frieda Fordham explains the process of Individuation as "the experience of finding. . . the God within. . . ."⁸

The conclusion I draw from reading Mrs. Fordham's account is that there is one solution with two names. One can achieve totality of being either through adopting the established Christ or through individuating the Self. Whatever name it goes by, the process and its effects on the personality are the same, namely, the promotion of a harmonious state of balance between the conscious and the unconscious which provides

mankind with inner peace.

The establishment of a direct link between Jung and Muriel Spark must, I think, depend on two pieces of evidence. Firstly, there are the views expressed by the novelist in the interview with Weatherby which has already been cited; and secondly, there is the essay by Mrs. Spark on Jung's interpretation of the story of Job.

In the interview, under the title "My Conversion," she makes comments on her spiritual state, on her conversion to Catholicism, and on the effects of her conversion on her writing, which approximate statements made by Jung on the character and career of a modern man. The material of the interview, together with the little biographical information available, form a sketchy but identifiable prototype for the central characters in her novels. She and they appear as people whose spiritual problems and progress towards a solution are very close to those experienced by Jung's modern man.

Prior to her conversion in 1954, Mrs. Spark's religious history seems to be confused. She was born into a Judaeo-Scottish-Presbyterian background, a confusing enough start in life for anyone, and this was later to send her on a search for spiritual security and strength to Low and High Anglicanism, in turn, and finally, after a nervous breakdown, to Roman Catholicism. In the interview with Weatherby she specifically likens her experience of religious conver-

sion to the achievement of individuality, a factor of prime importance to Jung's modern man. She says:

Catholicism is really a Christian thing to me conducive to individuality, to finding one's own individual point of view. I find I speak far more with my own voice as a writer, whereas before my conversion I couldn't do it, because I was never sure what I was, the ideas teemed but I couldn't sort them out, I was talking and writing with other people's voices all the time. But not any longer. That is the effect of becoming a Christian. People talk about Catholics as if it is the Co-op, a kind of spiritual Co-op which you join and get so many dividends. But the Catholic faith really has enormous scope.

There is a great sense that her conversion to an established religion has provided both the security and freeing agent that she needed:

I didn't get my style until I became a Catholic because you just haven't got to care, and you need security for that. That's the whole secret of style in a way. It's simply not caring too much it's caring only a little.

And later in the same interview she sets up as an essential common to both a writer and a Christian, a sense of proportion, which is close in concept to that balanced proportion between the conscious and the unconscious which Jung frequently points out that modern man needs to establish. Mrs. Spark says:

I used to worry until I got a sense of order, a sense of proportion. At least I hope I've got it now. You need it to be either a writer or a Christian.

Certainly, in the Catholic faith, she seems to have found no barriers to her development. Instead she claims to have found freedom and, what is more important, a way to express her essential nature. She says:

The Catholic Church for me is just a formal declaration of what I believe in any case. It's something to measure from. But I never think of myself as a Catholic when I'm writing because it's so difficult to think of myself as anything else.

She obviously feels that she has found security and comfort within a traditional background, and I think that in her novels this is what she is trying to lead her central characters to. Most of them are Roman Catholics who are troubled within their Catholicism. Their search is for security and comfort, and Mrs. Spark tries to find for them the release from their agony of spirit which she found. The fact that few of them do seems to point to either a flaw in their attitude to their religion or else to the continuing presence in the author's mind of some doubts about religion.

Therefore, on the evidence of Muriel Spark's own words, I would say that the process she went through in becoming a Roman Catholic, and the effects of her conversion, parallels in many ways the search of Jung's modern man for the Self and that this process is expressed imaginatively in her novels. Her attitude to Jung's ideas on the nature of God, however, seems to be unfavourable. This is expressed in the critical essay which appeared in the Church of England newspaper, concerning Jung's interpretation of Job's suffering. Only in this piece of writing have I been able to track down a definite expression of her attitude to Jung, and the unfavourable criticism she makes rests on two main points. The first is her inability to accept Jung's ideas on

the nature of God, the exposition of which occupies a large part of Answer to Job. That Jung believes in the existence of God as a psychic fact rather than as a supernatural fact is one basic difference between Jung and Mrs. Spark. Further, Jung's statement "We cannot tell whether God and the Unconscious are two different entities,"⁹ draws from the orthodox Christian the comment "That is where his findings differ from those of Christian theology."¹⁰

One firm barrier between the acceptance of Jung's theories on God and the acceptance of the orthodox Christian view, which concerns Mrs. Spark, is Jung's attitude to Evil. His view of the Godhead is that it is not a Trinity but a Quaternity, and that the fourth face is Evil, which takes the form of Satan. This implies, of course, that God is a totality of good and evil, which is contradictory to the orthodox Christian belief in a god who is wholly good.

The second point which Mrs. Spark brings against Jung is that, in his interpretation, he chooses to leave out an examination of the Epilogue to The Book of Job. The Epilogue presents a picture of a benevolent God, heaping reward upon his victim, and thus provides the story of Job with a happy ending. Mrs. Spark is probably right to challenge Jung with omitting this, but for the wrong reasons. She seems to feel that this would interfere with a picture of God which Jung is trying to construct and that therefore he is guilty of trying to

shape the facts to fit a theory. In fact, I think Mrs. Spark mistakes the emphasis in Answer to Job. The examination of the nature of God is one part of the initial scheme of work. Jung says in his Introduction:

The Book of Job serves as a paradigm for a certain experience of God which has a special significance for us today. These experiences come from inside as well as from outside, and it is useless to interpret them rationalistically, and thus weaken them by apotropaic means. It is far better to admit the affect and submit to its violence than try to escape it by all sorts of intellectual tricks and emotional value-judgements. Although, by giving way to the affect, one imitates all the bad qualities of the outrageous act that provoked it and thus makes oneself guilty of the same fault that is precisely the point of the whole proceeding: the violence is meant to penetrate man's vitals, and he to succumb to its action. He must be affected by it, otherwise its full effect will not reach him. But he should know, or should learn to know, what has affected him, because in this way he transforms the blindness of the violence on the one hand and of the affect on the other into knowledge.

The whole point of the enquiry is to know, to bring the unconscious into consciousness, thereby transforming dark into light. When Job realized the nature of God, then he submitted, but not until then was he content to do so. The problem of Job is not being regarded in a religious light only. That is, the whole enquiry takes its motivation from Jung's passionate interest in modern man as he is represented by Job, rather than in the historical figure of Job himself. There is no joyous prize-giving for modern man as there was for Job; therefore, the inclusion of the Epilogue is irrelevant to the examination.

Despite the fact that Mrs. Spark finds Jung's Answer to Job unsatisfactory, her essay helps to establish a link between the two writers. Otherwise, the establishment of any other link between the two must rely on my interpretation of Muriel Spark's comments in the interview with Weatherby. She says that she finds the Book of Job to be a "type of anagogical humour which transcends irony and which is infinitely mysterious,"¹¹ and she is right; as long as one does not examine the nature of the suffering and of the Creator of that suffering, the tale is one of absurd humour. This leads me to point out that most of Mrs. Spark's novels are obviously in the same category. On the other hand, an examination of the mysterious Creator and of Job's sufferings tends to make one agree with Jung that the Book of Job is a story of tragic potential.¹² And this is where the door opens for a discussion of Muriel Spark's novels and of her central characters, for I think that they are closer to tragic figures than the novelist is prepared to admit.

CHAPTER II

THE CENTRAL CHARACTERS AS MODERNS

In a discussion of Muriel Spark's principal characters as "moderns," according to Jung's use of the term, one could examine the whole range of her characters, because they all exist within a complex pattern of social interaction. I prefer, however, to concentrate mainly on the principal characters of four of the novels, The Comforters, Robinson, The Bachelors and The Mandelbaum Gate, in a discussion which will be analytic and which will make only minor attempts to trace a developing pattern through the novels.

At the outset, it must be said that the principal characters of these four novels have more in common with each other than with the other characters in a particular novel. So that, in this respect, at least, one can see a pattern underlying the novels to date. I hope to show that what they have in common is their "modernity," that is, their loneliness, their conscious detachment from the traditions of the collective life of their race, their search for their true identity, for the whole Self. I shall try to show how they all attempt to promote and hold onto consciousness, leaving behind the Unconscious, which causes their intense desire for knowledge and truth, and, per-

haps most interesting of all, that they attempt to find ease from their spiritual sufferings within Roman Catholicism. Caroline in The Comforters, Ronald in The Bachelors and Barbara in The Mandelbaum Gate all seem to me to be successors to Job, the ancient/modern man, who found that the only way to control his suffering was to submit completely to the old order of total obedience to God, while at the same time arming himself with the knowledge that he, by being conscious of his own nature and of God's, was actually superior to his god.

Two of the characters under discussion here, Caroline Rose and Barbara Vaughan, are cast in identical moulds, and they have a decided resemblance to their creator, Muriel Spark. All three women are intellectuals of a sort, interested in the study of English literature. Caroline is engaged in writing a book entitled Form in the English Novel, and we learn of Barbara that her "intelligence had come to maturity in the post graduate tradition of a great university's English department," (The Mandelbaum Gate, 18). All three women have a Jewish background and have become converted to Roman Catholicism; Caroline is going through the agony of a mental breakdown such as Muriel Spark suffered in 1954. Barbara is on a tour of the Middle East resembling that which the author herself made in 1961. There seems little doubt that Mrs. Spark is writing herself into these two characters, which throws some light on her personal development

since the two characters are eight years apart in their creation. Both are moderns on a search, but the agony of the earlier book has mellowed into a more intellectual appreciation of the search for a unified Self which appears in the later book. The conviction that the Roman Catholic faith is the right one for her has strengthened Barbara and given her a much more stable mental attitude than that which Caroline has. We learn that Barbara has "something absolutely undisplaceable in her nature, her Catholic faith" (42), and that she thinks that "either religious faith penetrates everything in life or it doesn't. . . . Either the whole of life is unified under God or everything falls apart" (The Mandelbaum Gate, 307).

The resemblance between novelist and character is present also in the career of Caroline Rose. In 1954, Muriel Spark experienced a nervous breakdown, conversion to the Roman Catholic faith, and the freeing of her powers as novelist. In 1957, Caroline Rose goes through the same process. The first time that we meet her is just after her conversion, at the pilgrim centre of St. Philomena. The place is being run by the horrendous Mrs. Hogg of the unsupported bosom. The idea of the centre is to allow hundreds of pilgrims at a time to enjoy each other's company in a huge public Retreat. Caroline is, however, of a very different calibre from the usual pilgrim, as Mrs. Hogg is quick to spot:

"Mm. . . I know your type," Mrs. Hogg said, "I got your type the first evenin' you came. There's a lot of the Protestant about you still. You'll have to get rid of it. You're the sort that doesn't mix. Catholics are very good mixers. Why won't you talk about your conversion? Conversion's a wonderful thing."

(The Comforters, 32)

In a way, she is correct, there is a lot of the Protestant about Caroline. She likes to keep aloof, saying "I must mind what I say. Keep aloof" (33). Her attitude to her fellow-pilgrims is highly critical:

She saw them again, nursing themselves in a half-circle as they indulged in their debauch of unreal suffering; "Prejudice!" ". . . an outright insult!" Caroline thought, Catholics and Jews; the Chosen, infatuated with a tragic image of themselves. They are tragic only because they are so comical. But the thought of those fireside martyrs, Jews and Catholics revolted Caroline with their funniness.

(The Comforters, 38)

In the midst of a collective religion, Caroline is agonizingly lonely, although this takes two forms, one of which is self-imposed. She prefers to remain aloof from the collective business of her religion, as is shown by her reaction to the Pilgrim Centre. On the other hand, at the celebration of the Mass, where she is supposed to be a participant in a communal experience all she can feel is a terrifying isolation:

Having been much in Laurence's company for the fortnight past, and now alone in this company of faces, in the midst of the terrifying collective, she remembered more acutely than ever her isolation by ordeal.

(The Comforters, 100)

Although she is a person who prizes privacy, and prefers to remain "secluded within her proud personality"(186), she nevertheless feels

her increasing separation from friends due to her mental confusion, and especially dreads losing contact with her ex-lover, Laurence, and he, in fact, feels that "Caroline was on shifting ground, liable to be swept beyond his reach at any moment"(98).

In his work, Jung emphasizes modern man's desire for Consciousness and Knowledge. He needs to organize the chaos of his experience, because it helps to give him a sense of himself as a total individual. This process of organizing experience, of savouring consciousness is one method which Caroline uses in her attempts to come to an understanding of her spiritual suffering. We learn that she is incapable of accepting a total experience because it "antagonized the diligence with which Caroline coped with things, bit by bit" (100). One of the reasons Mrs. Hogg dislikes her is that "she sees [she is] grisly about the truth"(35). The process of searching for the truth, trying to organize and formulate, helps to keep Caroline sane in the midst of her experiences with the Voices. After her first panic subsides, she tackles the problem in a way designed to control the experience:

Caroline was very quickly asleep. And even as she slept, she felt herself appreciating her sleep; told herself, this was the best sleep she had had for six months. She told herself to sleep on, for she would wake up presently, and then she would mean business.

(The Comforters, 69)

She deliberately courts the Voices once she thinks she has a grasp on what is happening to her. Having accepted the reality of an unreal ex-

perience, she cultivates the unreal:

During the hours of the night, rather than ring for the nurse and a sedative, she preferred to savour her private wakefulness, a luxury heightened by the profound sleeping of seven other women in the public ward.

(The Comforters, 137)

Eight years later Muriel Spark presents us with another face of Muriel Spark in the character of Barbara Vaughan in The Mandelbaum Gate. She is an older, more stable version of Caroline, and her problems are not so much religious or spiritual as social. She is secure inside her Catholicism, as far as her spirit is concerned, but her social identity bothers her. As a part-Jewish, part-Anglican Roman Catholic convert on a pilgrimage to the Christian shrines in Israel and Jordan, she seems an almost ludicrously impossible character until one remembers that the novelist went on a tour of the Middle East in 1961, as a part-Jewish, part-Anglican Roman Catholic convert. It is small wonder that Barbara Vaughan is having difficulty in preserving or indeed even in finding her identity.

The whole of the second chapter, "Barbara Vaughan's Identity," is devoted to a discussion of her previous life, and her search for Identity. Until she visits the new state of Israel and is subjected to a battery of questions by her Israeli guides concerning her origins, she feels very little concern about her identity. After being questioned she thinks

the man wants to know who I am, that is, what category of person. I should explain to him the Gentile-Jewish situation in the West, and next, the independence of British education, and the peculiar independence of the Gentile Jew whose very existence occurs through a non-conforming alliance.

(The Mandelbaum Gate, 24)

Barbara has found her paradoxical social origins to be perfectly acceptable, despite the experience of having two distinct family groups who refuse to accept the existence of the other side of the paradox.

The family on her mother's side at Golder's Green, with whom she spent half of the vacations of her youth, had proved as innocently obtuse about her true identity as had the family at Bell Sands, Worcester-shire, with whom she spent the other half.

(The Mandelbaum Gate, 27)

Meeting the refusal of the Israeli guide to accept the background which she describes, and although feeling that "she had known who she was till this moment"(23), Barbara is forced to realize that her essential nature is undefined, that

the essential thing about herself remained unspoken, uncategorized, and unlocated. She was agitated, and felt a compelling need to find some definition that would accurately explain herself to this man.

(The Mandelbaum Gate, 24)

Attacked by a barrage of questions, Barbara "felt displaced, she felt her personal identity beginning to escape like smoke from among her bones"(23) and a habit of mind and temperament reasserts itself, the need to define:

she held as a vital principle that the human mind was bound in duty to continuous acts of definition. Mystery was acceptable to her, but only under the aspect of a crown of thorns.

(The Mandelbaum Gate, 24)

Again we have the same need for explanation, order and organization of experience which dominates Caroline Rose, and is a mark of a modern man. In the end, of course, Barbara does find herself, and it is the same self that she was when the questions of the guide disturbed her, it is the paradoxical self which is a whole being in spite of the diverse elements:

For the first time since her arrival in the Middle East she felt all of a piece; Gentile and Jewess, Vaughan and Aaronson; she had caught some of Freddy's madness, having recognized by his manner in the car, as they careered across Jerusalem, that he had regained some lost or forgotten element in his nature and was now, at last, for some reason, flowering in the full irrational norm of the stock she also derived from: unselfquestioning hierarchists, anarchistic imperialists, blood-sporting zoophiles, sceptical believers--the whole paradoxical lark that had secured, among their bones, the same life for the dead generations of British Islanders. She had caught a bit of Freddy's madness, and for the first time in this Holy Land, felt all of a piece, a Gentile Jewess, a private-judging Catholic, a shy adventuress.

(The Mandelbaum Gate, 173)

From this moment in the novel, she re-asserts her right to be an individual, to be just what she is, a unified being made up of paradoxical elements. She re-establishes herself as the Barbara Vaughan who won her identity years before in the face of two influential, strongly established and totally diverse family circles.

The two women, Caroline Rose and Barbara Vaughan, are treated in a very sympathetic manner by the novelist, perhaps because there is such a large autobiographical content in their creation. Miles Mary Robinson, however, the central character in Muriel Spark's second

novel, Robinson, is treated far more harshly by his author, and yet his spiritual sufferings are on a par with Caroline's and far greater than Barbara's. There is a lack of warmth towards this character which gives the novel an unpleasantly callous tone, which is partly due to the character of the female narrator, January Marlowe, whose character is as frosty as her name. She judges Robinson to be "a selfish but well-meaning eccentric. . ."(Robinson, 162), and thus she disposes of a man who is very much more than a selfish eccentric. He is a man who has deliberately cut himself off from his traditional social and religious background, from "the participation mystique" and hopes, by doing so, to preserve his private nature, his individuality.

The principle reason for detaching himself from society as much as he can is his inability to accept some of the doctrines of his faith, that is, of Roman Catholicism, and especially the phenomenon of the rise of Marianism. The Assumption of Mary into Heaven, a decree of one of the recent Popes, is discussed at considerable length in Jung's Answer to Job. Jung feels that the Church, by raising the stature of the mother of God to a divine level, has answered a need being experienced especially by twentieth century Christians for a marriage in Heaven from which a second Saviour will be born to save the world. Obviously, a decree of this importance is a challenge to intellectual

Christians, and Robinson has reacted adversely, a fact which January Marlowe feels to merit great scorn. Most of Muriel Spark's characters seek out established religion as a help in solving their problems; only Robinson leaves Catholicism, and his treatment by the author strikes the reader as prejudiced, although his intellectual powers and honesty are vastly superior to those of the other characters in the novel.

As already stated, Robinson makes a double withdrawal from tradition, one religious, the other social. January learns that he is a member of a wealthy family and heir to a large fortune, both of which he rejects in order to live in an almost solitary state on a deserted island, where his peace is shattered by the imposition of unwelcome guests, the survivors of a 'plane crash. One of the survivors, a kinsman of Robinson, says "Robinson takes no care for the honour of his family. . . . I am acquainted with Robinson from the days of my youth, and is for cert he chuck the world" (Robinson, 41). The solitude and loneliness of Jung's modern man, who is in the painful process of finding a whole self and is tearing himself free from the participation mystique, is very clearly shaped in Robinson into a physical rather than a psychological form of separation and solitude. Robinson is not truly separated from society on psychological terms, only very conscious that he wants to be, and this may

explain why he is reluctant to allow friendships to develop among the survivors of the 'plane crash, and, in fact, may explain his very defensive attitude towards people in general. Right from the beginning of the novel, from the moment when January first regains consciousness after the 'plane crash and sets eyes on Robinson, the character of the man is established in terms which make him seem very distant. At January's first encounter with him he "looked very tired and sighed a little"(11), he "smiled feebly"(12), he smiled "in his weary manner"(15), and as soon as she is fit to move around independently "he seemed relieved"(15) to be rid of the burden of responsibility. The effect of such descriptions is to achieve a very slow and opaque tone in the novel. It is almost as if the reader were watching the proceedings from a half-conscious state where actions and voices have a disembodied quality, as in a fairy tale. Robinson has established a type of dream world on the island, a world which is weak enough, however, to be threatened immediately by the presence of outsiders. He tries desperately to keep the survivors from making either friends or enemies within the group. As January says:

Robinson encouraged a certain formality among us. We were as yet ignorant of each other's antecedents. Robinson did not ask any questions or lead us to talk about the circumstances which had brought us on the Lisbon plane, our homes, and destinations. I gathered from this that he was anxious to regard our intrusion into his life as temporary: once you know some facts about a person you are in some way involved with them. Evidently Robinson wished to avoid this. So did I. At first this reserve gave an illusion of natural growth to our relation-

ships.

But of course the decent gulfs did not last. Sometimes it seemed that Robinson did not so much desire to preserve distance between us as to prevent intimacy; he seemed more anxious that we should not be friends than that we should not intrude on each other. . . . I felt that Robinson was determined to keep control. He was fixed on controlling himself, us, and his island.

(Robinson, 46-47)

Robinson is a genuine enough modern man in that a great part of his life is taken up with questioning a traditional religious system, in his case, Roman Catholicism, and more specifically the doctrines of Marianism. We learn from January that Robinson spent some time in his youth in a seminary, preparing for the priesthood, but that, after travelling in Latin American countries in order to observe Catholic practices there, he left the Church. January says:

He left the Church on account of what he considered its superstitious character. In particular he objected to the advancing wave of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and to this effect he wrote many letters to Catholic papers and articles later collected into a book entitled The Dangers of Marian Doctrine. Still professing the Catholic faith himself, Robinson maintained that the Church had fallen into heresy.

(Robinson, 77)

The original publication was written about 1917. In May 1954, January finds a copy lying on Robinson's desk along with pages of "pencilled addenda on which he was still working. . ."(78), and those books in his bookcase which are the most thumbed are those on Mariology. The reason for his dislike of Marianism is that "Mariology was identified with Earth mythology, both were identified with superstition, and superstition with evil"(80). As January says later, Robinson was "constitutionally afraid of any material manifestation of Grace"(99). Ma-

terial objects such as January's rosary and Tom Wells' trinkets are identified with the same superstition which underlines his dislike of Marianism. He says to Miguel, the young boy whose guardian he is, that the trinkets are "evil things" (59) which are "full of harm" (60), and he goes so far as to steal January's rosary when he thinks that she intends to teach Miguel the rosary devotions, giving as his excuse that he wishes Miguel "to grow up free from superstition" (98). Robinson is a man who has separated himself from society and its traditions in the most extreme physical form possible, by living on a deserted island, where he has very little contact with the outside world. His mental separation, however, is weak enough to allow him to crack under the weight of outside intrusion. As January records in her diary, "Robinson simply could not stand us. We had intruded on his privacy and he did not like us. He didn't like us" (162).

Robinson's attitudes seem to proclaim him a man who realizes what modernity is, and indeed one who values it highly. At the same time he is obviously strongly influenced by his unconscious, and he has within him what January Marlowe calls "a well of darkness. . ." (164). The act of scattering blood from a slaughtered goat around the mountain-side in an effort to persuade the others that he has died violently strikes January as having about it a quality of pagan savagery, as though it were

done in order to satisfy "something vicious in him," some "bloody delight" or "cancer of the soul" (164). Robinson himself admits to the presence of some powerful and primitive desire to do violence: "Things mount up and then one has to perpetrate an outrage"(162). Comments of this nature indicate that Robinson is, in fact, a great deal more than the "selfish but well-meaning eccentric" (162) that January thinks him. His quest for a total identity is in full bloom in the novel, and we see him at the end "wearily moving his possessions on to some boat bound for some other isolation"(175), because his little island has started to sink in the Atlantic, taking with it his dream world of isolation.

One aspect of modernity which Jung emphasises is modern man's proficiency and creativity. He "must be proficient in the highest degree, for unless he can atone by creative ability for his break with tradition he is merely disloyal to the past."² It is one of the criteria which Jung uses to distinguish a real modern man from a pseudo-modern man, and Robinson does not pass the test. It is true that his intellectual life has been an involved one, but his work is critical and destructive, not creative. The aspect of life on the island which could develop his proficiency and creativity, namely agriculture, is neglected. He has chosen to live in semi-primitive conditions but fails to perform the acts of agricultural cultivation which might justify his deliberate

separation on this island. The land is fertile, and in order to live fully on it he should cultivate it. Instead, by failing to do this, he fails also to meet the responsibilities of the type of life he is attempting to lead. As January says:

the lack of cultivation on the island was a continual source of irritation to me. It was not simply that it offended some instinct for economy and reproduction. It was more; it offended my aesthetic sense. If you choose the sort of life which has no conventional patterns you have to try to make an art of it, or it is a mess.

(Robinson, 84)

An upholder of tradition has passed her judgement on failed modernity. Robinson has as yet made only half a job of being modern, and in the pathetically childish display of upset which manifests itself in the disappearing trick, Mrs. Spark also seems to be passing her judgement on half measures and on those who lack the full courage of their convictions.

The final picture given of Robinson is of a pathetic man, condemned by himself to wander. Jung's modern man is one who is solitary in a crowd because of his greater awareness, his scepticism and his break with the collective mystique. Robinson is the only one of the novels which is not set within a civilized community, and this may be one of the reasons why it is less appealing than Mrs. Spark's other books, which derive a great deal of their vitality from the interaction of the society in which they are set.

Of all Muriel Spark's characters, the one who is in the greatest spiritual agony is Ronald Bridges in The Bachelors, and although the novelist hides her sympathy in irony as much as Ronald does his agony, his every appearance on the scene is almost painful, so intensely alone is he and expecting always the worst in order to protect himself:

It is better, he thought, to be a pessimist in life, it makes life endurable. The slightest optimism invites disappointment.

(The Bachelors, 100)

Whereas Robinson deliberately cuts himself off from leading a normal social life, Ronald has the separation thrust upon him by the physical fact of epilepsy. His chosen calling, the priesthood, is closed to him; he feels himself to be almost a leper, to be unfit for conducting a successful career or a successful marriage.

Ronald would think, I can manage. And anyhow, I might never have been able to follow and rise to the top of a normal career. What is a normal career? The law: closed to me--but, his friends had said, you need not put in for Lord Chancellor, you could be a successful solicitor. Oh, could I?--You haven't seen me in a fit. The Civil Service: closed to me. No, not at all, said his advisers. Medicine, teaching, get yourself into a college, try for a fellowship, you've got the academic ability--you know what some dons are like, there wouldn't be anything odd. . . .

"I could never be first-rate. . . ."

"Oh, first-rate. . . ."

He had been twenty-three when the fits started, without warning, three months after he had turned his attention to theology. The priesthood: closed to me. Yes, said his friends, that's out; and, said his theological counsellors, it never would have been any good in any case, you never had a vocation.

"How do you know?"

"Because, in the event, you can't be a priest."

"That's the sort of retrospective logic that makes us Catholics distrusted."

"A vocation to the priesthood is the will of God. Nothing can change God's will. You are an epileptic. No epileptic can be a priest. Ergo

you never had a vocation. But you can do something else."

"I could never be first-rate."

"That is sheer vanity"--it was an old priest speaking--"you were never meant to be a first-rate careerist."

"Only a first-rate epileptic?"

"Indeed yes. Quite seriously, yes," the old priest said,

(The Bachelors, 11-12)

Ronald has to live his life among but not with the human race. He is a man on his own, compelled by his fits of unconsciousness to move forward into a morbidly sensitive consciousness:

In the course of time, this experience sharpened his wits, and privately looking round at his world of acquaintances he became, at certain tense moments, a truth-machine, under which his friends took on the aspect of demon-hypocrites. (The Bachelors, 14)

There are only two occasions in the book when we learn that his fellow human beings have established contact with him on equal terms, and these are both connected with his professional life as a skilled graphologist, in which sphere his opinion is highly valued.

To Ronald's museum came criminologists from abroad, people wishing to identify the dates of manuscripts, or the handwriting attached to documents of doubt. Some came in the hope of obtaining character "readings" by which they meant a pronouncement as to the character and future fortunes of the person responsible for a piece of handwriting, but these were sent away empty. Ronald gained a reputation in the detection of forgeries, and after about five years was occasionally consulted by lawyers and criminal authorities, and several times was called to court as a witness for the defence or the prosecution.

(The Bachelors, 15)

Later, during the trial of Patrick Seton, the alleged spiritualist medium, two handwriting experts are called to give evidence, and one of these is Ronald, to whom the second expert turns with a gesture of recognition which pleases Ronald because of its implications of brother-

hood:

Fairly smirked slightly at Ronald as he left. Ronald winked. They are saying, Ronald thought, that we are in the racket together, regardless of the law.

(The Bachelors, 205)

Occasions such as these Ronald appreciates, since it is of vital importance to him that he should compensate for a disastrous social life by a successful career. Professional consultations help him to gain confidence in himself; they accord him respect from his equals. These are, however, submerged in the book by the far more numerous occasions on which he is consulted by his acquaintances about their personal problems in a manner which pushes him into the combined roles of confidant, doctor of psychology, and priest. His appearances in the book along with the other characters are usually centered around confidential chats, where his acquaintances use him as a kind of father-figure. While asking his advice about marriage, Matthew Finch, one of the bachelors of the book, says to Ronald "I hope you don't mind me consulting you like this?", and the weary reply he gets is "everyone consults me about their marriages" (75). In fact most of his conversations with others end up as consultations, however they may have started out. Ronald says "Everyone tells me their troubles"(160), and indeed it is so.

Ronald is denied the Christian priesthood because of his disease, but that same disease pushes him into the solitary role of the pagan

priest, the man apart, because of the superstitions of his social world.

After Martin Bowles has asked his opinion on a particular matter, Ronald reflects a trifle bitterly on his situation:

People frequently asked this question of Ronald. It was as if they held some ancient superstition about his epilepsy: "the falling sickness," "the sacred disease," "the evil spirit." Ronald felt he was regarded by his friends as a sacred cow, or a wise monkey. He was, perhaps, touchy on the point. Sometimes, he thought, after all, they would have come to him with their deep troubles, consulted him on the nature of things, listened to his wise old words, even if he wasn't an afflicted man. If he had been a priest, people would have consulted him in the same way.

(The Bachelors, 64)

Because he is shut off from so much of normal social life, Ronald is determined to excel in the few ways open to him, and proficiency becomes his watchword. It is a matter of great pride to him that his memory should be good and that he should perform his job to the best of his ability. His reputation as a graphologist is very important to him; therefore, when he finds his proficiency threatened by his mistress, the superhealthy Hildegarde, he ends the affair in order to protect the only source of his self-respect:

"Your memory is better than mine," Ronald said.

"I'll be able to remember for us both."

As he thought, when we're married, she'll do everything for both of us. So that, when he remonstrated against her obtaining the theatre tickets, and told her he could perfectly well get them--"I'm not an imbecile"--and she replied, "I know, darling, you're a genius"--he decided to end the affair with this admirable woman. For it was an indulgent and motherly tone of voice which told him he was a genius, and he saw himself being cooked for, bought for, thought for, provided for, and overwhelmed by her in the years to come. He saw, as in a vision,

himself coming round from his animal frenzy, his limbs still jerking and the froth on his lips--and her shining brown eyes upon him, her well-formed lips repeating as he woke such loving patronizing lies as "You'll be all right, darling. It's just that you're a genius." Which would indicate, not her belief about his mental capacity but her secret belief in the superiority of her own.

(The Bachelors, 18)

Ronald's whole career as a "first-rate epileptic" seems to me to be an allegory of modern mankind on Jung's terms. His resemblance to the afflicted Job is especially noticeable in passages where we see him as an undeserving victim who is desperate to make some friendly contact with his tormentor:

He resolved to go to confession, less to rid himself of the past night's thoughts--since his priest made a distinction between sins of thought and these convulsive dances and dialogues of the mind--than to receive, in absolution, a friendly gesture of recognition from the maker of heaven and earth, vigilant manipulator of the Falling Sickness.

(The Bachelors, 112)

There remain three more characters to discuss briefly in this chapter, Freddy, Abdul and Suzi in The Mandelbaum Gate. Freddy Hamilton, a British diplomat in Israel, is a character full of pathos, who undergoes a type of nervous breakdown which is characterized by amnesia. For three glorious days, of which he has no immediate recollection, he frees himself from the habits of a life which has been dominated by the idea of duty to one's family and one's country. He is taken over by "some lost or forgotten element in his nature" (The Mandelbaum Gate, 173), and influences Barbara Vaughan enough to give her the same sense of release from the demands of rational and explainable behav-

ious. Freddy manages to cut himself from the domination of a tyrannical mother, a process which he should have completed long before he reached middle-age. The contrast between Freddy and another character, Alexandros, who lives as a young man, in the midst of full sensual enjoyment, although older than Freddy, is sharp. As Alexandros says "If a man has lived older than his years till middle age, then he should start to live younger" (145). In Alexandros' company, Freddy experiences, for the first time in many years, tremendous physical awareness of his own person and of his surroundings:

Freddy felt as the conversation proceeded, a sense of his appearance which he had not thought about for years; and although his thoughts and speech were given to the eager matter of discussion, a left-hand accompaniment. . . went on in his brain concerning his own physical presence. . . ,
 (The Mandelbaum Gate, 148)

And later, during their meeting

They ate, and Freddy felt Alexandros' eyes upon him and experienced that sense of his own physical qualities, and the qualities of the room, and, most of all, the carpet glowing on the far wall. . . Freddy felt he could lift Alexandros on one finger, and was perfectly at ease with his own self-awareness.

(The Mandelbaum Gate, 150)

He experiences real happiness during the stolen three days, although he afterwards suffers an equally real sense of horror and bewilderment, and

when the doctor had left, he sat with his head in his hands, while currents of horror, unidentifiable, unknown to experience, charged through his mind and body continually. (129)

His reaction has a double cause. Firstly, he learns that his mother has been brutally murdered by an old servant, and he feels that he might have been able to prevent this event had he not disappeared for three days. Secondly, he is horrified by the realization that he has been taken over for a few days by the unconscious life whose existence he tries pathetically to deny:

"I don't believe there's such a thing as the Unconscious," Freddy said. "How could there be a certainty about something unconscious. If something is unconscious then it's unknown. So the Unconscious is only a hypothesis at best." (128)

Eventually, he learns to overcome his sense of horror, and to come to terms with his experiences, at least in his later life:

Looking back at the experience in later years Freddy was amazed. It had seemed to transfigure his life, without any disastrous change in the appearance of things; pleasantly and essentially he came to feel it had made a free man of him, where before he had been the subdued obedient servant of a merely disorderly sensation, that of impersonal guilt. And whether this feeling of Freddy's subsequent years was justified or not, it did him good to harbour it. (148)

This is, regrettably, the only lasting effect of his three days of freedom but at least for these three days he has tasted some of the joy of having a free spirit. Never again does he conduct his behaviour in the irresponsible and youthful manner which he adopts during his bout of amnesia; nevertheless, the essential nature of the man is changed for the rest of his life, and he himself is free, although his behaviour may not be.

Two of Mrs. Spark's most delightful characters are the blue-eyed young Arabs, Abdul and Suzi Ramdez, a brother and sister who have grown

up in the shifting, vicious world of the post-war Middle East. Their response to their traditional Arab environment is rebellion, and the pair of them take a great delight in fooling the traditional world of their family:

It was at this time that the secret affinity ripened between Abdul and Suzi. She was then fifteen, Abdul nineteen. He talked of new ways of life and outlook, undreamt of even by their modernized parents. His imagination went wild in most particulars, but Abdul conveyed to her. . . the excitement of what was in his mind. He said that the modernization of Joe Ramdez was simply a new form of exploiting the old mentality. In this way Suzi discovered the future as an idea, and together the brother and sister merged in a pact of personal anarchism; they started to fool everyone; they conformed to outward demands and resisted in spirit, the Arab mysticism of their nature easily adapting itself to this course.

(The Mandelbaum Gate, 99)

Suzi has broken with the stringent codes which dominate the social behaviour of Arab women, for she has complete sexual freedom, and refuses to marry any of the men her father has picked out for her. Abdul is a player of many parts, a charming liar, who is consistent in only two of his attitudes; firstly, he has a total lack of respect for all representatives of the older, traditional way of life as indicated in the above quotation and secondly, he feels at ease only among the crowd of young drifters who gather in Acre to pool their potential:

the place itself, by some invisible influence or tradition, had drawn the same sort of people, the young or the young at heart who belonged to nothing but themselves, for whose temperament no scope existed in any society open to them, and who by day enacted the requirements of their society. They were lapsed Jews, lapsed Arabs, lapsed citizens, runaway Englishmen, dancing prostitutes, international messes, failed painters, intellectuals, homosexuals. Some were silent, some voluble. Some were

mentally ill, or would become so. But others were not. Others were not, and never would become so; and would have been the flower of the Middle East, given the sun and air of the mind not yet to be available.

(The Mandelbaum Gate, 104)

It is an indictment of their environment that all this potential for being "the flower and pride" of their nation is forced into idiosyncrasy and exaggerated behaviour. And one cannot help taking sides on this issue, as I feel Muriel Spark does, because Suzi and Abdul, representatives of the drifting world of Acre, are such a delightful pair of moderns.

Of all seven of the characters discussed in this chapter, perhaps only Ronald, of The Bachelors, meets all the requirements of modernity on Jung's terms. Certainly he is the most touching of the seven. The others present between them different stages of the one problem, how to survive in the pain of modernity. At present the most that can be done by way of tracing a developing pattern of characters is to draw out the more obvious points of comparison and contrast which exist between her modern characters. The term modern implies the need to differentiate between those who bear this label and those who are traditionalists. Certainly, in these novels, there is a sharply defined difference between the central characters and the various social groups in which they are living. There is also an obvious difference in their treatment by the novelist. The moderns are almost all the subjects of a sympathetic treatment, while the groups from which they stand out are

usually drawn with scant respect. Since this is a subject which I will bring up in the final chapter in connection with the satiric content of the novels, I will leave these remarks to stand unamplified at present.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF EVIL

One of modern man's biggest problems is to find a satisfactory explanation of the nature and source of evil, a problem which has hitherto been answered by the decrees of established religion and superstitious folklore. According to Jung, Job, in his affliction, comes to see that evil emanates from the dark, unconscious side of Yahweh's nature, and that the only answer to the undeserved onslaught is "to admit the affect and submit to its violence" (Answer to Job, 4) because "the violence is meant to penetrate man's vitals, and he to succumb to its action" (4). This view does, of course, accord with the ancient Hebraic belief in a god with a dual nature, with a Dark and a Light side, a view which Jung would find satisfactory and which is contrary to Christian belief. The Christian doctrine of privatio boni states that evil is nothing but an absence of good, and that it has no existence without the condition of good. The Devil was created not as an evil but as a good angel. Inasmuch as the "good" was corrupted by his rebellious Free Will it disappeared, and he became evil. No thing was created to be evil, by God, and therefore the natural state of creation was essentially and

initially good.

This is undoubtedly an oversimplified version of a very complex problem. However, since I am concerned in this chapter only with an exposition of the evil which afflicts the characters in several of Muriel Spark's novels, I am content to accept working definitions of the nature of, and solution to, evil, according to established religion and Jungian psychology, since these appear to be the two sources of the systematic thought traceable in Mrs. Spark's work.

Although there is in fact no established creed in the Christian Church on the nature of evil, there is a belief in a benevolent, all-powerful Creator who created the world in a totally good form. Therefore the presence of Evil, which is undeniable, is attributed to a privatio boni, to the corruption of a nature which is essentially perfectly good. As H. L. Philp, a Christian theologian, says in his book, Jung and the Problem of Evil, "There is no answer to Job's problem apart from a good and loving God"(203). Until the promised Second Coming and Day of Judgement, the Christian has to throw himself on God's infinite goodness and mercy.

In Answer to Job, Jung deals with evil in a mythological rather than in a psychological form. He equates evil with Satan who, as one of the sons of God (the other being Christ, the son of Light) is part of the unified Godhead. That is, instead of a Trinity, the Godhead is a

Quaternity consisting of the Father, Son, Holy Ghost and Satan. This approach establishes evil as a positive force, not simply as privatio boni, and involves believing that God has a dual nature and that he is responsible for evil as well as for good. The recognition of this fact, on the part of Job, is necessary to the process of individuation which he goes through, and which, according to Jung's interpretation, God Himself has to go through in order to regain his moral superiority over his creature, Man.

As Jung sees it, Job can arrive at a type of solution only through submission made bearable by knowledge. His peace comes from an intellectual ordering of the experience, from bringing the life of the unconscious into the conscious. The Christian view is that

Intellectually, Job did not find, nor could he find, any convincing answer to his problems. What is described is a mystical experience which enabled him to submit, and in which peace was given to him.¹

In Muriel Spark's novels there is a blend of the two solutions. Her modern characters are fully aware, in the psychological sense. They are living in a largely conscious world, yet they have made the declaration of Faith and can therefore live happily as moderns in an established tradition, accepting all the paradoxical conditions which exist within the Church and yet having a full individual, personal life being, in fact, "private-judging Catholics."²

If, as I contend, Muriel Spark's central characters are moderns, then they must be largely concerned with the problems of evil, especially as it manifests itself in undeserved suffering. And it is a fact that the impetus behind most of the novels is the old-fashioned struggle between Good and Evil. Evil, in the novels, can be categorized, broadly, in two ways. Firstly, there is the evil of circumstance and situation; that is, non-moral evil, such as the crippling arthritis which afflicts Jean Taylor in Memento Mori. And secondly, there is the evil which emanates from wicked characters, from the Satanic characters such as Mrs. Hogg in The Comforters. The way in which the modern characters deal with the two distinct types of evil shows how a Roman Catholic author sees moderns at work in a world which is a paradoxical blend of tradition and modernity. It seems to be the case that non-moral evils are dealt with according to Jung's ideas on submission and knowledge, while moral evil is fought and judged on moral grounds. Presumably the non-moral evil comes under the heading of the mysterious ways which God uses to perform his wonders, and therefore the Christian finds no difficulty in using the same method as Jung advocates, submission.

Non-moral evil plays a large part in making the lives of Mrs. Spark's characters miserable to a considerable degree. With the exception of Dougal Douglas in The Ballad of Peckham Rye, all of her

principal characters suffer from some form of illness, either mental or physical. It is almost as though their spiritual unease, as moderns, is translated into physical symptoms, and perhaps the reverse process also applies. For example, the epilepsy which afflicts Ronald in The Bachelors is seen, of course, as a purely physical illness, but there are suggestions that it is a manifestation of some spiritual upset. Some of the other characters hold with the traditional superstitious explanation of epilepsy as the workings of a devil inside the sufferer. As Isabel Billows says:

"Oh, Ronald, you always see the worst side of everything, there's a diabolical side to your nature."

"What do you mean, diabolical?"

"Well, possessed by a devil, that's the reason for your epilepsy."
(The Bachelors, 108)

The fact that other people regard him as demon-ridden has the effect of sharpening his wits, of increasing his consciousness and his alienation, a process already discussed in the preceding chapter. However, he has the experience, also, of suffering unusually severe epileptic fits only after a period of spiritual struggle. On one occasion

he had an epileptic seizure lasting half an hour; it was a type of fit in which his drugs were useless. This often happened to Ronald after he had made some effort of will towards graciousness, as if a devil in his body was taking its revenge.

(The Bachelors, 112)

On such occasions he feels that he is devil-ridden, and has an instinctive desire to fight the evil which torments him. Instead, he goes to Confession to throw himself on God's mercy, thereby conforming to Job's eventual reaction and to the idea of the disease being non-moral evil. And indeed his most effective method of dealing with his torment is that of Job--knowledge and submission. Truth and consciousness are of great importance to Muriel Spark's moderns, and Ronald manages to control the effects of the seizures by prepared knowledge and submission. His doctor tells him

"your seizures concern the brain but not the mind. You will learn to prepare for them physically in some degree but not to control them. They won't affect the mind except in so far as the emotional psychological disturbances affect it. That's not my department."

Ronald had retained every one of these words importantly in his memory for the past fourteen years, aware that the specialist himself would possibly remember only the gist, and then only with the aid of his records cards. But Ronald held them tight, from time to time subjecting the words to every possible kind of interpretation. "Let me put it that your seizures concern the brain not the mind." Ronald argued with himself at times throughout the years, that the mind is part of the brain; then why did he say "Let me put it that. . ." What was his intention?

(The Bachelors, 11)

Describing the process of the fits to a doctor, Ronald says:

"I find it easier to endure [a] partial consciousness of my behaviour during the fits than surrender my senses entirely, although its a painful experience."

(The Bachelors, 14)

Similarly, Caroline Rose, in The Comforters, handles her nervous breakdown by getting to know, as best she can, what its course

and nature are. Her breakdown takes the form of hallucinations, in Caroline's case hallucinatory voices, which cause her enormous terror at first, when they are a new and unknown factor in her life:

Just then she heard the sound of a typewriter. It seemed to come through the wall on her left. It stopped, and was immediately followed by a voice remarking her own thoughts. It said: On the whole she did not think there would be any difficulty with Helena.

There seemed, then, to have been more than one voice: it was a recitative, a chanting in unison. It was something like a concurrent series of echoes. Caroline jumped up and over to the door. There was no one on the landing or on the staircase outside. . . . Everything was quiet. . . .

Then it began again. Tap-tappity-tap; the typewriter. And again the voices: Caroline ran out on the landing, for it seemed quite certain that the sound came from that direction. No one was there. The chanting reached her as she returned to her room. . . . And then the typewriter again: tap-tap-tap. She was rooted. "My God!" she cried aloud. "Am I going mad?". . . . [She] sat for the next half-hour dazed and frightened. . . . She was trembling, frightened out of her wits, although her fear was not altogether blind.

(The Comforters, 42-44)

She is completely routed by the voices on the first occasion and flees for help, in the middle of the night, to a friend's house. There she finds that the effort of describing the experience helps her to control her fear. The more she talks, the more orderly the experience gets, and the more knowledge she has the better is she able to deal with the situation, and we find that she "felt the better for the effort to describe what had happened. . . in her own interest, she talked on and on. . . ." (53). The next day, she has composed herself enough to hope that the voices will come back, for now she wants to track down their source. We are told that "On the whole, she hoped

the voices would return, would give her a chance to establish their existence, and to track their source"(58). Once Laurence, her ex-lover, is with her, helping her to tackle the problem, the panic subsides almost completely, and the hunt for the voices becomes a kind of detective game. She and Laurence even go so far as to use a tape-recorder in their efforts to track down the voices, and Caroline attacks the problem in a highly practical manner the next time that she hears the voices:

Tap-tappity-tap. . . . Caroline sprang up and pressed the lever on the dictaphone. Then she snatched the notebook and pencil which she had placed ready, and took down in shorthand the paragraph above. . . .
(69)

And Jean Taylor, in Memento Mori, is another who finds it easier to submit to the agonies of her arthritis when her intellect is free from the dulling effects of drugs:

Then she was forced to cry out with pain. . . . A nurse brought her an injection. . . . The arthritic pain subsided, leaving the pain of desolate humiliation, so that she wished rather to endure the physical nagging again. After the first year she resolved to make her suffering a voluntary affair. If this is God's will then it is mine. She gained from this state of mind a decided and visible dignity. . . .
(Memento Mori, 17)

Thus, where the evil which afflicts them is non-moral, Muriel Spark's moderns submit to a violence which is made bearable only through the cultivation of the intellect. The reaction is different, however, when the evil is of a moral nature, and is traceable to particular human

sources. Then moral evil is met with moral good, and the moderns fight most purposefully. Not for nothing are they mostly Roman Catholics, and the fight between moral good and evil in these novels is very like the struggle in the mediæval morality play with its tradition of buffoonery and terror.

Nor is the fight particularly clean, for the "good" characters, that is, the moderns, favour one method in particular in order to win the battle, namely, betrayal. This apparently paradoxical situation, where good characters do wrong in the promotion of goodness, is obviously acceptable to Mrs. Spark, and to those good characters involved, under the title of "The end justifies the means." Evil is a process of corruption, and in order to preserve the purity and totality of the Self, modern man has to fight immorality with immorality. Obviously Muriel Spark is very interested in the question of betrayal, because so many of her principal characters are involved in situations of betrayal. Two typical instances occur, in Memento Mori and The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, and one less typical in The Mandelbaum Gate, and all three involve the assertion of an individual's right to have a free soul; the betrayal is made in all three cases in order to rescue the individuality of a character from being taken over by other power-hungry people.

In the case of Jean Taylor's betrayal of Charmian Colston in Memento Mori, it is the freedom of Charmian's husband, Godfrey, which is endangered. The betrayal of long-kept secrets, concerning a love-affair between Charmian and another man, is made with an easy con-

science by a strongly religious person. She reveals the whole story to a friend whom she has chosen to carry confidential information to Godfrey Colston, concerning his wife who has been a long-time friend and employer of Jean Taylor. She recites the details factually and unemotionally:

You must inform Godfrey Colston that Charmian was unfaithful to him repeatedly from the year after her marriage. That is starting in the summer of 1902 when Charmian had a villa on Lake Geneva, and throughout that year. . . . Her lover was Guy Leet. . . .

(Memento Mori, 169)

It is a total betrayal of Charmian, but she has a very good reason for acting in this fashion. Jean Taylor acts immorally in order to put an end to immorality. Because his wife, Charmian, is a famous novelist Godfrey has a large-sized inferiority complex, and is desperate to preserve a good image in her eyes. Largely by guesswork, the housekeeper, Mrs. Pettigrew, learns of Godfrey's association with a young girl:

The jig-saw began to piece itself together in Mrs. Pettigrew's mind. As heart is said to speak unto heart, Mrs. Pettigrew looked at Olive's photograph and understood where Godfrey had been wont to go on those afternoons when he had parked his car outside the bombed building.

"Of course, Godfrey, this will be a great blow for you," she said. He thought: God, she knows everything. . . . She could tell Charmian everything.

(Memento Mori, 164)

So great is his terror of Charmian finding out that he is ready to obey Mrs. Pettigrew implicitly. One of her demands is that Charmian should be put in a nursing-home, and it is when things get to this stage that

Jean Taylor feels justified in intervening. She says "There is a time for loyalty and a time when loyalty comes to an end. Charmian should know that by now (171). With these words she absolves herself of guilt.

In The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, we find Sandy Stranger eventually betraying Miss Brodie in order to preserve not only her own individuality, but also the individualities of her five schoolfellows who make up the Brodie set, and indeed to prevent the future formation of any more Brodie sets in the Marcia Blane School for Girls. In the name of promoting Individuality ("Phrases like 'the team-spirit' are always employed to cut across individualism, love and personal loyalties"),³ Miss Brodie tries to weld six separate natures into a controllable group, a fact which does not escape the notice of either Sandy or of the other mistresses at the school. The six girls are friends, attending the same school in Edinburgh, and they have been specially picked out by one of the teachers, Miss Jean Brodie, for training as the Brodie set. To Sandy "the Brodie set was Miss Brodie's fascisti" (The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, 31), although the opinion which the rest of the school has of them is of a much less frightening nature:

These girls formed the Brodie set. That was what they had been called even before the headmistress had given them the name, in scorn, when they had moved from the Junior to the Senior school at the age of twelve. At that time they had been immediately recognizable as Miss Brodie's pupils, being vastly informed on a lot of subjects irrelevant to the authorized curriculum, as the headmistress

said, and useless to the school as a school. . . . By the time they were sixteen. . . they [were] unmistakeably Brodie, and were held in suspicion and not much liking. They had no team-spirit and very little in common with each other outside their continuing friendship with Miss Brodie.

(The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, 5-6)

For six years, the girls are subjected to a special kind of training:

"I am putting old heads on young shoulders. . . all my pupils are the *crème de la crème* (8).

So the process of control goes on:

Miss Brodie had already selected her favourites. . . . Miss Brodie's special girls were taken home to tea and bidden not to tell the others, they were taken into her confidence, they understood her private life and her feud with the headmistress and the allies of the headmistress. They learned what troubles in her career Miss Brodie had encountered on their behalf. "It is for the sake of you girls--my influence, now, in the years of my prime."

(The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, 26)

It is not for some years that Sandy becomes afraid of Miss Brodie's possession of the set. Not until she sees a painting of the six girls, all with the face of Miss Brodie, does she realize fully what a take-over bid has been made for her soul:

Teddy Lloyd. . . did them in a group during one summer term, wearing their panama hats each in a different way, each hat adorning, in a magical transfiguration, a different Jean Brodie under the forms of Rose, Sandy, Jenny, Mary, Monica and Eunice.

(The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, 111)

Miss Brodie tries to impose on her set a type of fascist totalitarianism. Her possessiveness is so total as to be immoral, and therefore it has to be stopped. Sandy no longer feels that loyalty is due to her, and therefore she betrays Miss Brodie's Fascist politics to the head-

mistress who is anxious to rid the school of Miss Brodie.

A third character who performs an act of betrayal is Freddy Hamilton in The Mandelbaum Gate. This is perhaps the most interesting of the three situations because his desire to betray moral evil in order to preserve his nature is totally unconscious and manifests itself in three days of amnesia. Freddy is the victim of moral blackmail of a tyrannical domineering mother, under whom he endures a long, spiritual slavery, carried on mainly by letter. He knows that he and his sisters have been the victims of "a peculiar type of tyrant-liar" (The Mandelbaum Gate, 59), but they are all caught in a web of complicity. Then, under stress, Freddy's subconscious desire to cut himself off from this evil which dominates him, asserts itself. His act of betrayal is to destroy two letters, one to his mother and the other to her maid, and then to disappear for three days, during which time his mother is murdered by the maid, an act which the letters might have prevented. Freddy turns his back on his mother when she really needs help, and therefore he is, in a sense, guilty of her murder. But the point is that he has more of a responsibility, in Muriel Spark's eyes, to save his own soul from being swallowed up than he has to preserve the life of a tyrant. He feels that the act of destroying the letters had "made a free man of him where before he had been the subdued, obedient servant of a mere disorderly sen-

sation, the act of impersonal guilt" (148).

This betrayal is the work of the Unconscious rather than the conscious mind, and therefore Muriel Spark may be expressing the idea that the desire for the freedom of the individual soul must be a very basic one in human nature. She seems to be saying that even when the conscious mind cannot cope with evil, man has an inherent sense of what is morally right for his own soul, and that this sense asserts itself regardless of years of conditioning such as Freddy has experienced. Thus the novelist is striking a blow for the Christian belief that all nature is created essentially good with an instinctive knowledge of Good.

It seems to me that the comic element in moral evil is important to these novels. The actual comic vision will be discussed in the next chapter, but I feel it is worth noting here that most of the evil characters, the Satanic types, are a good source of comedy, of a kind which is very like the farcical comedy of mediæval morality plays. There, the devil-figures played a dual role; they were, by turns, funny and horrific. While they were intended to terrify the audience with sudden appearances, and with the extent of their capacity for imposing suffering and chains on the human soul, they also caused laughter by their grotesque appearance and general lack of personal charm. The morality play Devil performs the age-old role

of mischief-maker, with the more serious final intention of gaining control of human souls.

A detailed discussion of the reasons for drawing evil as comic in these novels belongs in the next chapter. We can, however, look at Mrs. Spark's devil-figures as mischief-makers. Characters such as Mrs. Hogg from The Comforters, Mrs. Pettigrew in Memento Mori, Tom Wells in Robinson, and Patrick Seton and Father Sockett from The Bachelors are all physically grotesque and fit subjects for caricature; all are mischief-makers, and all are intent on gaining control of other souls by using secret information as a blackmail weapon. Just as moral betrayal perpetrated by her good characters occupies Mrs. Spark, so does the moral blackmail attempted by her Satanic characters. Tom Wells, the salesman of magic trinkets and editor of an astrological magazine, uses the information which he prises out of his clients in a "lonely hearts" column to blackmail them. Mrs. Pettigrew discovers some secrets affecting Godfrey Colston and proceeds to exert enough blackmail to paralyze his free will, making him putty in her hands. It takes Jean Taylor's betrayal of his wife, Charmian, to give him back his individual will power, a betrayal to defeat blackmail.

One of the best examples of the morality play type of devil is surely Georgina Hogg. A woman who is totally lacking in any personal charm

and attraction, she has learned to replace attraction by love with attraction by fear. She has spent her life perfecting the techniques of moral blackmail. As her ex-husband, Mervyn Hogarth, reflects on her possession mania, she acquires the appearance of some hideous, man-eating mediæval dragon.

It was not any disclosure of his crimes that he feared from Georgina, he was frightened of the damage she could do to body and soul by her fanatical moral intrusiveness, so near to an utterly primitive mania. . . .

He felt himself shrink to a sizeable item of prey, hovering on the shores of her monstrous mouth to be masticated to a pulp and to slither unrecognizably down that abominable gully, that throat he could almost see as she smiled her smile of all-forgetting.

(The Comforters, 147)

There is an interesting comment on Mrs. Hogg's essential nature by the author, at one point. For most of the book she is an evil human being, but there is one occasion when we follow her back to her room where she proceeds to give a performance of the privatio boni principle:

However, as soon as Mrs. Hogg stepped into her room she disappeared, she simply disappeared. She had no private life whatsoever. God knows where she went in her privacy.

(156)

As a positive entity, without the differentiating factor of other people, she simply does not exist in the novel, for she is never seen alone. Indeed, in the presence of Lady Manders, a woman who is as near total goodness as a human being can be, she disappears again. The evil which is Mrs. Hogg has no private life whatsoever; she is literally a privatio

boni which is, of course, eliminated in the presence of good.

The devil as a mischief-maker is best presented in the figure of Dougal Douglas in The Ballad of Peckham Rye. But he is more than just a morality play devil, although the mischief he gets up to is very funny at times. There is, for instance, the occasion on which Dougal completely disrupts the smooth running of the local dance hall in Peckham:

Dougal was dancing with Elaine. He leapt into the air, he let go of her hands and dangled his arms in front of his hunched body. He placed his left hand on his hip and raised his right while his feet performed the rapid movements of the Highland Fling, heel to in-step, then to knee. . . . The jiving couples slowed down like an unwound toy roundabout, and gathered beside Dougal. A tall stout man in evening dress walked over to the band; he said something to the bandleader who looked over his shoulder, observed the crowd round Dougal, and stopped the band.

"Hooch!" cried Dougal as the band stopped.

Everyone was talking or laughing. Those who were talking were all saying the same thing. They either said, "Tell him to take more water in it," or "Shouldn't be allowed," or "He's all right. Leave him alone." Some clapped their hands and said, "'Core.'" The tall stout manager came over to Dougal and said with a beaming face. "It's all right, son, but no more, please."

"Don't you like Highland dancing?" Dougal said.

The manager beamed and walked away. The band started up. Dougal left the hall followed by Elaine. He reappeared shortly with Elaine tugging his arm in the opposite direction. However, he pressed into the midst of the dancers, bearing before him the lid of a dust-bin, which he had obtained from the back premises. Then he placed the lid upside down on the floor, sat cross-legged inside it, and was a man in a rocking boat rowing for his life. The band stopped but nobody noticed the fact.

(The Ballad of Peckham Rye, 59)

He is the egotist, the individualist, the organizer, and the role-player, in fact, he is a species of modern man. Therefore, in this character, Mrs. Spark is presenting an inclusive picture of the Devil both in his traditional guise and also performing a modern function.

He is the only one of Mrs. Spark's principal characters who is not a victim of suffering, either physical or mental. In fact, he has what he calls "a fatal flaw" (24) in that he cannot tolerate sickness in others. He seems to be a Jungian archetypal figure almost to the point of being formulated rather than having true life as a character. He is a representative of the demon-hero archetype, the figure of Satanic leadership, and throughout the book his stature as the Devil, in the eyes of the other characters, is built up. Mr. Weedon says:

"It may surprise you coming from me. But it's my belief that Dougal Douglas is a diabolical agent, if not in fact the Devil." (81)

Dougal himself does all that he can to foster the notion saying "I don't like crossing the river at night. . .not without my broomstick" (87).

And later on, while out walking with a girl "Dougal posed like an angel-devil, with his hump shoulder and gleaming smile, and the fingers of each hand outspread against the sky" (30). In conversation with Humphrey Place, the "romantic lead" of the novel, he says:

"Do you believe in the Devil?"

"No!"

"Do you know anyone that believes in the Devil?"

"I think some of those Irish-"

"Feel my head," Dougal said.

"What?"

"Feel these little bumps up here." Dougal guided Humphrey's hand among his curls at each side. "I had it done by a plastic surgeon," Dougal said.

"What?"

"He did an operation and took away the two horns. . . ."

(The Ballad of Peckham Rye, 77)

Everywhere Dougal goes, the well-ordered machinery of life in Peckham is disrupted--production output and efficiency in two factories slacken, one love affair ends with the bride being left at the altar, another with a murder; a dance-hall is disrupted, and there are cafe and bar brawls. The upsetting effect he has on the other characters is completely within the traditional Christian version of the Devil as a bringer of suffering. There is, however, the other side of his character which links him with some of Jung's theories on the nature of modern man. He brings the other characters into fuller self-awareness, and in so doing attacks the old citadels of complacency.

"I have powers of exorcism," said Dougal.

"What's that?"

"The ability to drive devils out of people."

"I thought you said you were a devil yourself."

"The two are not incompatible. . . ."

(The Ballad of Peckham Rye, 102)

Usually, on Jung's terms, the demon figure represents the evil potential of the Unconscious, and as an exploiter of the Unconscious seems to be the direct opposite of modern man, to whom consciousness is highly important. The demon-hero figures of literature, however, such as Milton's Satan, Cain, the Norse god Loki, Macbeth, Hamlet and Don

Juan, are all fully conscious of themselves and their great crime is that they try to upset the status quo. They all rebel against conformity and therefore they are all lonely characters who possess the dual destructive-creative potential in the expression of which they are extremely proficient. The demon-hero fulfills his traditional role of Potential Destroyer and his modern role as Potential Creator, but it is the demon part of the archetype which has the creative potential. The hero is the symbol of Good, of Perfection, which needs, and can admit of, no change. Only the Rebel, the Devil, can upset the status quo and be creative.

Dougal is a demon-hero who is both a destructive and a creative force. He acts as the agent whereby the other characters, especially Humphrey, are forced to re-examine their lives, and whether or not they benefit from contact with him depends on whether they are crumbling relics of an old-fashioned world, such as Mr. Druce and Mr. Weedon, or whether they already bear the stamp of modernity to some extent, as do Jinny and Humphrey.

Inasmuch as the Devil in literature is a lonely, solitary figure, he is partially modern, on Jung's terms, and in these respects Dougal Douglas is, also, partially modern. He flourishes extremely well in Peckham as the traditional devil figure because there is such a great lack of good there that the existence of evil is guaranteed according to

the doctrine of privatio boni.

It is a little difficult to separate Mrs. Spark's modernity from her traditional Catholicism, and indeed the existence of the two schemes in a working combination seems to be a large part of the power of her books. Certainly as far as her view on evil show themselves in her novels, she seems to be moving from the purely farcical view of the early novels, which is largely the reaction of a traditionalist, to a more determinedly philosophic attitude by the time she comes to write The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie and The Mandelbaum Gate. There is a very strong sense that the characters in the later novels have a real duty to perform in standing against the evil which they believe is attacking their integrity and purity of individual soul. The more pervasive the sense of duty the less comic does evil seem. Mrs. Spark would appear to be moving from an acceptance of evil, which allowed her to write farcical comedy in the early novels, to a more definite stand against it in The Girls of Slender Means and The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, to the more complex attitude of The Mandelbaum Gate.

CHAPTER IV

MURIEL SPARK AS A SATIRIST

In her interview with W. J. Weatherby, mentioned already in an earlier chapter,¹ Muriel Spark makes the comment that Roman Catholicism has given her "something to work on as a satirist," while at the same time asserting that she is not a "committed writer." Falling in with this idea is Frank Baldanza who says:

[Mrs. Spark] is clearly not committed to any way of life, or social class as a repository of those values which have disappeared from the modern scene. . . Mrs. Spark's satire consists, then, of an amused and detached observation of vice and folly in which the author herself espouses no clearly discerned, systematic set of values.²

Here we have a writer calling herself an uncommitted satirist and a critic agreeing with her.

Then try to balance this situation with the information given in a magazine article by Alexander Reid. He states that a Catholic organization, the Thomas More Association, has cited Muriel Spark as "a Christian satirist of unique and brilliant talent, whose remarkably fresh and entertaining work is clearly a therapeutic attack on superficiality in modern life."³ If the author meant what she said about her lack of commitment, then either she is wrong or the Thomas More Association has misread her work. Or could it be that both parties

are mistaken? Could it not be the case that Mrs. Spark is, in fact, committed to Christianity, as the Association obviously feels, and that she is a writer of Christian comedy rather than satire. After all, she has said, in the same interview with Weatherby, "I never think of myself as a Catholic when I'm writing because it's so difficult to think of myself as anything else." Someone who feels her religion to be so much a part of her nature must surely be regarded as committed, within any normal application of the word.

Her claim to being a satirist is more difficult to refute than is her claim to being uncommitted. The former claim is backed by support from a number of authoritative sources, including Derek Stanford, who was a close friend and colleague of Mrs. Spark for a number of years. In a magazine article, "The Work of Muriel Spark," he says that "her chosen instruments are irony and satire,"⁴ without giving examples to back up the statement. He likens Muriel Spark to Jane Austen, finding them both to be "exposers of pretence, analysts and satirists of affectation." According to him, Mrs. Spark is in the "Waugh tradition," a statement which I do not consider to be wholly true. There is, of course, a similarity of tone, and of witty comment; but Waugh is bound to direct his commitment into a satiric attack, that is his Catholicism and the social implications of being a Catholic in a neo-pagan society are his raison d'etre as a writer,

whereas I think that Muriel Spark has escaped the limitations that one finds in Waugh.

It is a strange situation that exists. Author and critics make asseverations without considering the important fact that Muriel Spark is indeed a committed Catholic, whose commitment has led her in more far-reaching directions than satire. And yet, in the magazine Tirade, Henk Romijn Meijer devotes a whole article to discussing her completely as a satirist, while Samuel Hynes dismisses the subject entirely in one sentence, saying "She is not, as has been suggested, a satirist; her writing has neither the motive nor the tone of satire."⁶

It is my contention that, in order for an author to be labelled a satirist certain conditions must exist to the exclusion of others, and that these conditions, although present in the case of Muriel Spark, do not indicate the main interest in her novels. Leaving aside the critics because their opinions on the nature of satire are so diverse, one has to go to the short list of time-honoured satirists in order to get a working definition of satire. In such authors as Chaucer, Dunbar, Swift, Pope, Dryden, Jane Austen, Jonson, Orwell and Waugh, for example, there is, in spite of a vast difference of technique and complexity of attitudes, one basic factor which unites them. That is, that they all have their heads turned to the past, to which they look with a type of nostalgic regret. Therefore, if these authors are satirists, which seems to be

generally agreed upon, then firstly, a satirist must surely be a Conservative, he literally must desire the continuation or the re-establishment of a way of life which, in its perfectly healthy form, seems to him to be more desirable than any other way of life. He is satirizing the corruption of established forms in order to try, by cleaning up the decay, to re-instate the forms in all their first vigour and strength. The man who wishes to eliminate the old completely is the Revolutionary, and Revolutionaries are a race notoriously lacking in humour. Inasmuch as she is a member of the Roman Catholic church, Muriel Spark is automatically a Conservative, and it seems logical therefore to examine her attitude to Catholicism in order to find out if it does, as she herself says in the interview with Weatherby, "give [her] something to work on as a satirist." If she were a satirist, and because she is a Roman Catholic, one would presume that the dominating interest in her books would be the rescue or purgation of lapsed Catholicism, or the defeat of the Church's enemies, atheists or Protestants.

In fact, when we come to examine her novels there are only two lapsed Catholics, Laurence in The Comforters and Robinson in Robinson, and neither is satirized for his loss of faith. Nor are there really any characters in the other novels who could be called corrupt in the practice of their Catholicism. The Catholics who really succeed in annoying the novelist are the "fireside congregations of mock martyrs"

such as those with whom Caroline Rose clashes in The Comforters, those who are Catholic-born and carry with them the clichés of persecution and prejudice, and those who are converts for the sake of finding ease and security. As one convert says, in The Comforters, "The wonderful thing about being a Catholic is that it makes life so easy. . . ." (40). However, I fail to find her attitude to these types to be truly satiric. Instead, she makes an openhanded attack on them, registering her disgust through that of her heroine, Caroline:

Caroline thought, Catholics and Jews; the Chosen, infatuated with a tragic image of themselves. They are tragic only because they are so comical. But the thought of those fireside martyrs, Jews and Catholics, revolted Caroline with their funniness. . . .

She tugged and pulled the rosary in her pocket, while her thoughts, fine as teeth, went into action again and again with the fireside congregations of mock martyrs, their incongruity beside the real ones. . . it was an insult.

(The Comforters, 38)

Included in the group of fireside martyrs is Mrs. Hogg, and in her position as warden of St. Philumena's Retreat she is the main target for Caroline's disgust; but to say that she is satirized because she is a Catholic, is scarcely true. She has far more force in the novel as a Satanic figure, a representative of evil, than as an unsatisfactory Catholic, and as such she becomes one of the comic-horrific devil figures discussed in the previous chapter, rather than an object of satire.

Apart from the central characters and the satisfactory Catholics such as Sir Edmund and Lady Helen Manders in The Comforters, and Jean Taylor in Memento Mori, the Catholic characters in Muriel Spark's novels tend to be the objects of her open scorn and disgust rather than of a satiric attack. Several times, in different novels, we find the comment from a Catholic convert that she or he was prevented from joining the Church earlier because of the nature of an acquaintance who was already a Catholic. For instance, in Robinson, January Marlowe says, of her brother-in-law, "I was thinking of Ian himself, and how for years I was put off the Catholic Church because he was a member, and a carping exponent, of it." (Robinson, 79).

Her Catholicism is really Mrs. Spark's only claim to Conservatism, at least as far as the novels are concerned, for there are no attacks made on politics, the law or the courts, or the educational system. She makes an open attack on Catholics who bring the faith into disrepute by their superstition, prejudice and "fireside martyrdom" but it seems to me that it cannot be called a satiric attack because it is conducted in such an open fashion and with such a matter-of-fact approach.

A second condition which must surely be present in satire is commitment. By this I mean that the author is committed to a particular moral outlook which is offended by the object of his satire. Accord-

ing to Mrs. Spark, Catholicism provides her norm, and yet the commitment in her novels is not to the propagation of the cause of Catholicism so much as to the defence of the soul of modern man, in which defence Catholicism is matched and at times surpassed by the desire for Individuation. I feel this to be the area of her real interest, as I hope has been established in the preceding chapters, and the treatment of her central characters is very far from satiric. The plight of Job can be looked on as a comedy or a tragedy, depending on how resigned one is to the inevitability of suffering imposed by a Faceless and Ineffable Mystery. To pit one's tiny will against the will of the Almighty is, to the Christian, a comic absurdity, so that, to some, Satan is a comic character. As A. J. A. Waldock says of Satan, in Paradise Lost and Its Critics:

The whole point is that he is dashed down, the essence of cartoon-technique being to bring your adversary to grief by unfair means--in short, by some form of practical joke. This, of course, is precisely how Satan is treated here. What happens to him parallels in the exactest manner what used to happen in religious plays to the Devil and Herod, what happens in war-posters to our enemies.

(92)

That Muriel Spark, a Catholic, has chosen to incorporate the sufferings of her Job-like characters in comic novels ought to be predictable, but there is an interesting twist to this. All of her suffering souls cry out against their pain, but none is treated as a fit subject for comedy because of his suffering.

Where then does the comedy lie? What makes these books funny? The answer, I think, is involved with a statement made in the preceding chapter on the treatment of moral evil in the novels. To be a satirist implies the hope of the conversion of evil to good. To be a comic writer is to set forth the battle to the death between totally opposed forces and to see the only possible end of evil in total destruction rather than in conversion. This is surely what is present in at least the early novels of Mrs. Spark. Memento Mori, The Bachelors and The Ballad of Peckham Rye are battlefields where the forces of Good, represented by struggling Christians, meet the demons of Evil, who are drawn in almost cartoon-like dimensions. As already pointed out, to be a Christian is to have a vision of evil which must finally be comic. And this is, I suggest, where the comedy really springs from in the early novels, although, of course, the witty traits of style are responsible for putting the ideas across.

There is little doubt that Mrs. Spark finds small cause for comedy in the non-moral evil which attacks her central characters in the form of illness and disease, which is interesting when one recalls that her judgement of the Book of Job was that it was "a type of anagogical humour."⁷ As a writer who is essentially Christian ("I never think of myself as Catholic when I'm writing because I find it so difficult to think of myself as anything else"),⁸ she obviously finds moral evil to

be totally absurd, since those characters who are responsible for the moral evil in the novels are totally absurd as well as totally evil. Their absurdity is the absurdity of Satan, that is, of an inferior creature hoping for eventual victory over Good and coming too close to success to be a fit subject for the contempt of satire. Satan's downfall is guaranteed, eventually, by the Christian Church, and the Christian can therefore afford to find him absurd in the comic sense while at the same time according him the measure of respect which is due to an opponent who has proved himself a force to be reckoned with.

So it is with the Satanic characters such as Dougal Douglas, with his crooked shoulder and gleaming smile, who carries out his role as the Devil too effectively to be the object of a satiric attack. Yet he is totally absurd as a human being, unable to develop normal relationships with other people. The final picture we have of him, selling tape-recorders to witch-doctors in Africa, is of a figure who is more human being than devil, and becoming more and more absurd the more human he gets.

Such is the case with Georgina in The Comforters. Caroline feels her capacity for evil to be very strong and dreads touching even her hand (196), and the very air she breathes is contaminated, for, after she has paid Caroline a visit "Caroline sprayed the room with a preparation for eliminating germs and insects" (182). She succeeds

in terrifying Lady Manders by disappearing before her eyes, and in dominating by fear, the companions of her childhood. We learn that "She discovered and exploited their transgressions, never told on them. She ruined their games" (142). Blackmail is Mrs. Hogg's business, and the souls and will power of her victims are what she is after, and in this way she is an evil force to be reckoned with. As a woman, however, she is totally absurd, and is shown no mercy by her creator, the main target of attack being her enormous and uncontrollable bust, although the rest of her appearance is also most unfortunate. Seated at tea in St. Philumena's, Caroline's eyes fix themselves on Mrs. Hogg:

She began to take in the woman's details: an angular face, cropped white hair, no eyelashes, rimless glasses, a small fat nose of which the tip was twitching as she ate, very thin neck, a colossal bosom. Caroline realized that she had been staring at Mrs. Hogg's breasts for some time, and was aware at the same moment that the woman's nipples were showing dark and prominent through her cotton blouse. The woman was apparently wearing nothing underneath.

(The Comforters, 31)

Lady Manders' two sons, Giles and Laurence, find her "a sneak, a subtle tyrant," as a governess, but find their compensation in making her into an absurd figure of fun:

Laurence and Giles, . . . were overjoyed at Georgina's abounding bosom. Giles was the one who produced the more poetic figures to describe it; he declared that under her blouse she kept pairs of vegetable marrows, of infant whales, St. Paul's Cathedrals, goldfish bowls. . . . "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills," little Giles chanted for the entertainment of the lower domestics.

(The Comforters, 138)

Georgina Hogg causes hate, fear or laughter but is too powerful an opponent for satire. Patrick Seton in The Bachelors and Mrs. Pettigrew in Memento Mori follow a similar pattern; as devil figures, destroyers of the souls of their victims, they are pretty successful, as human beings they are absurd in appearance and behaviour. So that they are fit subjects for both respect and laughter.

The character with perhaps most control over her victims and the least success in her own life is, of course, Miss Jean Brodie, and she seems to represent the height of Mrs. Spark's morally evil characters. For in the two books which have appeared since, that is, The Girls of Slender Means and The Mandelbaum Gate, there is no figure who immediately strikes the reader as a Satanic character. Certainly, in The Girls of Slender Means the details of the group life in the hostel are of greater importance than any one of the characters. In fact, for the first time, I think the writing could be called satiric, mainly because for the first time the subject is an institution. Mrs. Spark gives a beautifully pointed picture of female communal life, where good looks and classless accent are necessary to rise above the herd, and where a subtle hierarchy of beauty prevails. For the first time, I feel there is a decided measure of contempt in the tone of the writing, for the stupidity of the girls who make the beautiful Selina their idol, for the men who can see only her beauti-

ful face and legs, and for Selina herself, who is so far gone in savagery that, during a fire, she rescues a Schiaparelli evening dress with a total indifference for the fear of a number of girls trapped in the blazing building. There is, for instance, the occasion when we see the effects on the other girls in the hostel of Selina's Sentences.

She [Jane] regretted having eaten the chocolate and put the rest of the bar right at the back of the shelf in her cupboard where it was difficult to reach, as if hiding it from a child.

The rightness of this action and the wrongness of her having eaten any at all were confirmed by Selina's voice from Anne's room. Anne had turned off the wireless and they had been talking. Selina would probably be stretched out on Anne's bed in her languid manner. This became certain as Selina began to repeat, slowly and solemnly, the Two Sentences.

The Two Sentences were a simple morning and evening exercise prescribed by the Chief Instructress of the Poise Course which Selina had recently taken, by correspondence, in twelve lessons for five guineas. The Poise Course believed strongly in auto-suggestion and had advised, for the maintenance of poise in the working woman, a repetition of the following two sentences twice a day:

Poise is perfect balance, an equanimity of body and mind, complete composure whatever the social scene. Elegant dress, immaculate grooming, and perfect deportment all contribute to the attainment of self-confidence.

Even Dorothy Markham stopped her chatter for a few seconds every morning at eight-thirty and evening at six-thirty, in respect for Selina's Sentences. It had cost five guineas.

(The Girls of Slender Means, 59)

Perhaps it is true that most of Mrs. Spark's characters are too individual and not sufficiently drawn as types to promote successful satire. For it seems to be the case that the best of classical satire is aimed at types, groups or institutions, and attacks on individuals

are rarely successful. Mrs. Spark does deal with groups, such as bachelors, old people, neurotics, schoolgirls, pilgrims, but the interest of the books tends to be centered on individual personalities within the groups who are not representative of the group. For instance, the bachelors as a race are made fun of in The Bachelors:

In Queen's Gate, Kensington, in Harrington Road, The Boltons, Holland Park, and in King's Road, Chelsea, and its backwaters, the bachelors stirred between their sheets, reached for their wound watches, and with waking intelligence noted the time; then, remembering it was Saturday morning, turned over on their pillows. But soon, since it was Saturday, most would be out on the streets shopping for their bacon and eggs, their week's supplies of breakfasts and occasional suppers; and these bachelors would set out early, before a quarter past ten, in order to avoid being jostled by the women, the legitimate shoppers. (The Bachelors, 7)

But the central bachelor, Ronald Bridges, is not representative of the group, nor is he usually made fun of, in fact the interest in the book is in him as an alien, as a modern.

While Mrs. Spark does give satiric treatment to groups in her novels, and exposes the petty foibles and vanities of such characters as the spiritualists in The Bachelors, I think that this is insufficient reason for regarding her as a satiric novelist. Comic absurdity and caricature far outweigh satiric content and are outweighed in turn by the progression of the sufferings of individual characters. One could call her a writer of Christian comedy, but to call her a satirist would be to spotlight the lesser parts of her work, for I think that if she ever becomes a truly great novelist it will not be as a satirist.

CONCLUSION

It seems to me that truly comic writing is the art of presenting either total disillusionment or total belief. When there is no hope at all, one might as well laugh as cry, and then we have black humour or else fantasy. When there is every hope in God's universe one can well afford to laugh, and then we have religious comedy. The more I read Muriel Spark's work, the more convinced I am that, were it not for her Christian faith which allows her to write the latter type of comedy, she could not write the other type, that is black humour. She is too interested in the fate of the individual to write true satire and cares too much about saving the souls of her central characters to write black humour.

In fact, I think that the only thing standing in the way of the development of a tragic vision is her Catholicism. Were she to become more religious and less Catholic, I feel that she might surprise herself with the depths of the tragic vision which I think lies at the heart of these books. She must know that she has this potential, for characters such as Freddy Hamilton are almost like preliminary exercises for something greater still to come. He is led several times to the stature of a tragic hero but each time

Mrs. Spark draws him back so that the effect is one of pathos, not grandeur. He is taken through a sequence of education and purgation, but is not allowed the glory of a final and soul-splitting moment of self-knowledge. Instead he withers into a mediocre little man, nursing inside his memory the seeds of a possible beauty.

"I would say you were a pomegranate," Freddy said, "only you taste sharper and sweeter. Pomegranates look good but they taste insipid." And all this conversation was soon to be gone from his memory for many months, suddenly returning on a day when the sun was a crimson disc between the bare branches of Kensington Gardens, and the skaters on the Round Pond were all splashed over the head and arms with red light, as they beat their mittens together and skimmed the dark white ice under the sky. So it was to be throughout the years; it was always unexpectedly, like a thief in the night, that the sweetest experiences of his madness returned; he was amazed at his irresponsibility for a space, then he marvelled that he could have been so light-hearted, and sooner or later he was overwhelmed with an image, here and there, of beauty and delight, as in occasional memories of childhood.

(The Mandelbaum Gate, 271)

Although it would be a far-reaching decision for her to admit her tragic potential and would probably affect her whole religious identity, I cannot help feeling that she is very near to making such an admission. Certainly The Mandelbaum Gate is terribly unfunny when placed alongside her other novels.

As it is, the earlier novels are paradoxically among the funniest and saddest of books, and deserve respect as such. I feel, however, that she is deliberately holding back the power of the central experiences of each novel and that eventually she will be forced to give way

to the tragic potential which lies at the heart of her work.

The conclusions noted do not veer off the main topic, which is an attempt to establish Mrs. Spark as a modern novelist, "modern" that is in the Jungian sense. However, the very use of the term "modernity" immediately widens the scope of one's comprehension of a work of literature, opening the way to exciting new dimensions, and it is hard not to over-interpret and not to become engaged in chasing red herrings. The intention, in the beginning, was to limit the thesis to the establishment of a link between Jung and Spark, and to follow this merely with an analytical examination of the central characters. Obviously, in Chapter IV, I have stepped beyond these limits, because I now feel that several approaches have been opened up which will stand extensive development, and which may eventually help to catch hold of the elusive charm which is an essential part of Muriel Spark's work. The most important effect which this thesis could have would be to dispose of the notion that Mrs. Spark is primarily a satirist. This definition of her literary talents has done her very much less than justice, since it has tended to limit criticism to matters of style, to the neglect of content. There is material in the novels for a very extensive examination of her tragic potential. There is the question of the treatment of the secondary characters. There is the relationship of her Catholicism to her tragic

vision, and the way in which she uses the comedy of manners for tragic effect. An examination of her use of time-schemes and flash backs would also probably throw considerable light on the comic and tragic effects. All these avenues have been left unexplored because the point of the thesis was to dispose of the limiting notion that Mrs. Spark is classifiable as a satirist, and this task has taken a full thesis to perform without going beyond these narrow limits.

FOOTNOTES

Introduction

¹ Spark, "My Conversion," Twentieth Century, CLXX, 61.

² Ibid., 60.

Chapter I

*All quotations from the novels, throughout the thesis, are taken from the Penguin editions, except in the case of The Girls of Slender Means and The Mandelbaum Gate, where the Macmillan editions have been used.

¹ Since I have very little psychological training, I have relied heavily on An Introduction to Jung's Psychology, by Frieda Fordham, in order to come to a better understanding of Jung's basic ideas.

² Jung, C. G., Modern Man in Search of a Soul. "The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man," 229.

³ Philp, H. L., Jung and the Problem of Evil, 14-16.

⁴ Jung, Answer to Job, 180.

⁵ Ibid., 180.

⁶ Ibid., 172.

⁷ Fordham, An Introduction to Jung's Psychology, 72.

⁸ Ibid., 76.

⁹ Jung, Answer to Job, 177.

¹⁰ Spark, "The Mystery of Job's Suffering--Jung's New Interpretation Examined."

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Jung, Answer to Job, 4.

Chapter II

¹Spark, "Writers in the Tense Present," Queen.

²Jung, "The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man," 229.

*There is, of course, an obvious connection between Mrs. Spark's character, Robinson, and Daniel Defoe's character, Robinson Crusoe. It should be noted, however, that the former is responsible for his separation from society, whereas the latter has separation thrust upon him by the shipwreck.

Chapter III

¹Philp, Jung and the Problem of Evil, 203.

²Spark, The Mandelbaum Gate, 173.

³Spark, The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, 78.

Chapter IV

¹Spark, "My Conversion," 60.

²Baldanza, "Muriel Spark and the Occult," Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature, 202.

³Reid, "The Novels of Muriel Spark," 56.

⁴Stanford, "The Work of Muriel Spark," The Month, 94.

⁵Meijer, "Het Satirische Talent Van Muriel Spark," Tirade, 157-169.

⁶Hynes, "The Prime of Muriel Spark," Commonweal, 562-568.

⁷Spark, "The Mystery of Job's Suffering--Jung's New Interpretation Examined."

⁸Spark, "My Conversion," 60.

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